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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
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INFO RUEHGX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001717

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/WATERS

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TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IS](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#)

SUBJECT: HOME DEMOLITIONS IN AND AROUND JERUSALEM CONTINUE

REF: A. JERUSALEM 970

[1B](#). TEL AVIV 1508

Classified By: Acting Principal Officer Thomas Duffy, Reasons 1.4 (b) a
nd (d).

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary: Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) Coordinator Meir Margalit told PolOff he believes Palestinian homes near Israeli neighborhoods and roads are more likely to be demolished than homes in other areas. He said he thinks that certain West Bank areas are being targeted for future Israeli growth and to connect E-1 to the Jerusalem municipality. End Summary.

HOME DEMOLITION POLICY AND QUIET DEMOLITIONS

[¶2.](#) (C) In multiple, recent conversations, former Jerusalem City Council member and current Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) Coordinator Meir Margalit told PolOff that 59 housing units in East Jerusalem were demolished in the first half of 2007, including eight in July. Margalit said he had attended a July 31 Knesset meeting on home demolitions chaired by MK Ofir Pines-Paz, but was frustrated that the meeting focused on "humane" home demolitions, rather than the policy of home demolition itself.

[¶3.](#) (C) Margalit said the Jerusalem Municipality's priorities for home demolitions is: 1) Palestinian homes near Jewish neighborhoods; 2) homes near routes to Jewish neighborhoods; 3) homes built on public lands; and 4) homes in areas set aside for future Jewish development. In addition to these priorities, Margalit said the Municipality or the Ministry of Interior (MoI) sometimes demolish homes randomly to deter building without a permit. He added that hundreds of homes along the route of Jerusalem's planned ring road risk demolition when the road is built and that he believes revising the road route and/or narrowing the shoulder on the side of the road could prevent the demolition of a number of homes. (Note: The Jerusalem Municipality shares authority with the MoI inside Jerusalem for home demolitions. End note.)

EAST JERUSALEM: DEMOLITIONS POSSIBLY
CLEARING LAND FOR ISRAELI GROWTH

[¶4.](#) (C) Margalit observed that a number of homes were demolished this year in Jerusalem between the areas of Pisgat Ze'ev and Ramot Allon. He said he thinks there are plans to construct Israeli housing in this area. The homes demolished in this area included the home of Walid al-Rajabi in Beit Hanina, which was demolished in 2003 and rebuilt without a permit.

[¶5.](#) (C) On August 2, PolOff visited 'Anata, a Palestinian

neighborhood in Jerusalem and east of the separation barrier, which has been the site of a number of home demolitions. According to Margalit, Palestinian residents of 'Anata report generous offers from Israelis to buy their land -- as well as threatening phone calls. He believes the intention is to connect the E-1 area to Jerusalem. Margalit showed PolOff three houses within two blocks that were demolished in 'Anata this year and pointed out other areas where houses were demolished in recent years. Margalit told PolOff that one home owner is demolishing his own home to reduce the fine that he would be levied if the authorities demolished his home.

¶6. (C) ICAHD rebuilt two homes in 'Anata this summer, despite the fact that Margalit said ICAHD cannot obtain building permits to reconstruct previously demolished homes. By way of clarifying a complex home demolition policy, Margalit explained that 'Anata is divided between the Jerusalem Municipal boundary, Area B, and Area C. He said the Municipality and MoI demolish homes in the neighborhood that is within the Municipal boundary, and the Civil Administration responsible for the West Bank conducts home demolitions in the Area C part of the neighborhood. He noted that in the Area B neighborhood where the Palestinian Authority is responsible for civil affairs, no home demolitions have occurred.

DUFFY